

*Eighth*, While enumerating the many blessings which have come to us and the Nation as a result of emancipation, we cannot escape the stern logic of events. What is to be the status of the Negro in these United States is still an open question; and, more than any other, is absorbing American thought. There are those, we regret to say, who still assail the great principle of manhood equality out of which came the Proclamation of Emancipation. Denying the fitness of the race for the responsibilities of citizenship, and clinging with a death-grip to the effete dogmas of a degenerate philosophy, they have effectually negatived, in a large measure, the results of the four long years of battle and blood. It is not to be denied that, in many States of the South we do not enjoy the equal protection of the laws. In some the laws are framed for the direct purpose of our oppression. The ballot, placed in our hands by the Constitution of our country as a means of protection, has been deprived of its effectual expression of our will in the choice of representative of our sentiments to enact and execute the laws. The means by which this has been accomplished are too well known for repetition here. The wrong thus done us we have no other means of righting than that of protest, and appeal to the great body of law-abiding and law-loving people of the whole country. The matter touches the very foundation of our government.

The right to cast his ballot freely by every competent elector, and to have that ballot fully and effectually register his will, is the very basis of our free institutions. It is not a partisan nor a race question. It is a question of right and law. It is a prime consideration in democratic government, and should enlist the earnest, patriotic support of every true American. Let us guard the ballot-box—the great citadell of our liberty—with sleepless vigilance. Let us suffer no suspicion to rest upon its mandate. Let us offer a united resistance to every power or prejudice that would corrupt it. We feel this to be the duty of every American freeman.

*Ninth*, In the administration of the civil law in many States of the South Negro citizens are compelled to suffer indignities so gross and inhuman that they should set the stamp of shame upon our boasted Christian civiliza-